Here folowth the Churle and the byrde.

4° C. 39 Art. Seld. (25) 432
S. Selden d. 4 57(25)

Problemes/of olde lykenesse and fygure
which proued ben/fructuous of sentence
And haue auctorites/grounded in scripture
By resemblaunce/of notable aparaunce
with moralities/concludynge on prudẽce
Lyke as the byble reherseth by wrytynge
How trees somtyme chose them a kynge.

Fyrste in theyr choyse/they named Olyue
To rayne amonge them/iudicũ doth expresse
But he hymselfe gan excuse blyue
That they myght nat forsake the fatnesse
Nor the fygge tre/her amorous swetnes
Nor the vyne tre/his holsome fresshe corage
which gyueth comforte/to all manet of age

And semblable poytes laureate
By darke parables full conuenient
Fayne that byrdes and beestes of estate
As royall Egles/and lyons by assent
Sent out writtes to holde a paralyment
And made the crye/breuely for to say
Some to haue lordeshyp/and some to obeye.

Egles in the ayre/hyest to take theyr flyght
Power of lyons/on the grounde is sene
Cedre amonge trees/hyghest in syght
The laurell of nature/is aye grene
Of floures all Flora/aye goddesse and quene
Thus in all thynges/there ben dyuersytees
Churle & byrde.

Some of estate/and some of lowe degrees.

Poytes wrote/wonderfull lykenesse
And vnder couert/kepe them selfe full close
They take beestes and foules to wytnesse
Of whose sayenges/fables fyrst arose
And here I cast on my purpose
Out of frenche/ a tale to translate
which in a pamflete/I saw and redde but late

This tale/which I make mencyon
In grose reherseth playnly to declare
The great prouerbe/payed for the raunson
Of a lytell byrde/taken in a snare
wonderfull desyrous/to escape out of care
Of myn auctor folowynge the processe
So as it fell/in ordre I shall you expresse

Somtyme there dwelled in a small vylage
As myn auctor maketh mencyon
A churle/which had lust and corage
within hym selfe/by dyligent trauayle
To aray his garden/with notable aparayle
Of length and brede/in lyke square and longe
Hedged and dytched/to make it sure and stronge

All the alayes /were made playne with sande
The benches couered/with newe turues grene
with the swete yerbes/and condytes at hande
Than welled vp agaynst the sonne shynynge

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Lyke vnto ſyluer/or any chriſtall clere
The byrbyll wawes/ in theyr vp boylynge
Rounde as byrrall/theyr beames out ſhynynge.

In myddes of the garden/ſtode a freſſhe laurere
Theron a byrde ſyngynge day and nyght
with ſhynige fethers/bryghter than the golde wyre
which with her ſonge/made heuy hertes lyght
That her to beholde/it was an heuenly ſyght
How towarde euyn/and in the dawnynge
She dyd her payne mooſt amerouſly to ſynge

Eſperous/enkorced her corage
Towarde euyn/whan phebus went to the weſt
Amonge the braunches/to take her aduauntage
To ſynge her complaynte/and than to go to reſt
And at the ryſynge of the quene Alceſt
To ſynge agayne/as it were her deu
Early on the morow/the day after to ſalue.

It was a very heuenly melody
Euen and morow/to heare the byrdes ſonge
And the ſwete ſugred ermony
with vncouth warbles and tunes draw alonge
That all the garden/of the noyſe ronge
Tyll on the morowe/whan Tytan dyd ſhyne clere
The byrde was trapped/and caught in a pantere
¶ The churle was glad/that he ỹ byrde had take
Very of chere/of loke and vyſage
And in all haſt/he caſt for to make

Within his house/a lytell prety cage
And with her songe/to reioyse his corage
Tyll at the last/the cely byrde a brayde
And soberly to the churle she sayd

I am take and stande vnder daungere
Holden strayte/that I may nat fle
I due my songe/my lusty notes clere
Now haue I loste my lyberte
Now am I thrall/that somtyme was fre
And trust me well/whyle I stande in distrisse
I can nat synge/nor make no gladnesse.

And though my cage forged were of golde
And the pynacles/of byrall and chrystall
I remembre a prouerbe of olde
who leseth his fredome he leseth all
For I had leuer/vpon a braunche small
Merely synge/amonge the leaues grene
Than in a cage of syluer bryght and shyne

Sothe and prison/haue none accordaunce
Trowest thou I wyll synge in prison
Nay/for songe procedeth of ioy and plesaunce
And prison causeth deth and distruction
Redynge of letters maketh no merp sounde
Or who shulde be inery or iocounde
Agaynst his wyll that lyeth in chaynes bounde

what auayleth a Lyon to be a kynge

To be shyt vp in a towre of stone
Or an Egle vnder streyte kepynge
Called kynge of foules euerychone
Fye on lordshyp whan lyberte is gone
Answere hereto/and let it not astarte
who syngeth merely/ȳ̊ syngeth not at the herte

But and thou wylt reioyce of my syngynge
Suffre me to go fre from all daunger
And euery day in the greue mornynge
I wyll repayre vnto the laurere
And merely synge with lusty note clere
Under thy chamber/or a fore thyne hall
Euery season/whan thou lyst me to call.

To be shyt vp and pynned vnder dzede
Nothynge accordeth to my nature
Thoughe I were fedde with mylke & wastell brede
And swete curdes brought to my pasture
yet had I leuer to do my busy cure
Erly on the morow to scrape in the wall
To synde my dyner/amonge the wormes smaall.

The labourer is gladder at the ploughe
Erly on morowe to fede hym with bacon
Than some man is/that hath treasour ynoughe
And of all deinties plente and foyson
And no fredome with his possessyon
To go at large/but as a bere at a stake
To passe his bondes yf he leue take.

Take this answere for a shorte conclusyon
To synge in pryson thou shalte me nat constreyne
Tyll I haue fredome in wodes by and downe
To flye at large/on boughe roughe and playne
And of reason thou shuldest not disdayne
Of my desyre/but laughe and haue good game
But he ý is a churle/wolde eche man were the same

Twell quod the churle/syth it wyll nat be
That I desyre as by thy talkynge
Maugry thy wyll/thou shalte chose one of thre
within a cage merely to synge
Or to the kechyn I shall thy body brynge
Plucke thy fethers/that ben brycht and clere
And after rost or bake the to my sopere

well quod the byrde/as to reason I say not nay
Touchynge my songe/a full answere thou hast
And whan my fethers ben plucked away
Yf I be roste and baken in paste
On me thou shalte haue but a small repaste
But and yf thou wylte worke after my counsayle
By me mayst thou haue great auayle
Yf thou wylte vnto my reason assent
And suffre me to go fre from pryson
without raunsoth/or any other rent
I shall the gyue a notable guerdon
Thre great wysdomes/accordynge to reason
More of value/take hede what I profer

Than all thy golde that is shyt in thy coser

Trust me well/ I wyll the nat disceyue
well quod the churle/tell on let se
Nay quod the byrde/thou must afore conceyue
who that shall teche of reason must go fre
It sytteth/a mayster to haue his lyberte
And at large to teche his lesson
Haue me not in suspecte I meane no treason

well quod the churle I holde me content
I trust thy promyse which thou makest me
The byrde flewe forth/the chorle was of assent
And toke her flyght vnto the laurer tre
Than thought she/now stande I fre
with no panters I cast nat all my lyfe
Nor with lyme twygges/any more to stryue.

He is a fole that scaped is daungere
Broken his fetters/and fled out of pryson
To reforte/for the brent chylde dredeth fyre
Eche man beware of wysdome and reason
Of sugre strewed/whiche hydeth false poyson
There is no poyson venim so peryl⁹ of sharpenesse
As is/whan it hathe of tryacle a lykenesse

Who dredeth no peryll/in peryll he shall fall
Smothe waters ben oftentymes depe
The quayle pype can most fasly call
Tyll the quayle vnder the net doth crepe
A blere eyed fouler/trust not though he wepe

Eschewe his tombe/of weppynge take no hede
That symple byrdes can nype by the hede.

And I that now such daungere am escaped
I wyll beware/and afore prouyde
That of no foulet I wyll no more betaked
From their lyme twygges/I wyll flee fer a syde
where paryll is/great paryll is to abyde
Come nere thou churle/herken to my speche
Of thre wysdomes that I wyll the teche

Gyue nat of wysdome to hasty credence
To euery tale of eche tydynge
But consyder of reason and prudence
Amonge many tales/is many a great lesynge
Hasty credence/hath caused great hynderynge
Report of tales & tydynges brought vp newe
Caused many a man/to beholde vntrewe

For one parte take this of my raunson
Lerne the seconde/grounded on scrypture
Desyre thou nat by no condycion
Thynge/which is impossible to recure
worldly desyre stande in auenture
As who desyreth/to clym hye on lofte
By sodeyne turne/he falleth vnsofte

The thyrde is this beware both euyn and morowe
Forget it nat/but lerne this of me
For treasour lost/make neuer to great sorowe

which in no wyse/may recouered be
For who so taketh sorow/for loue of any degre
Reken his loue and after his payne
And of one sorowe/he maketh sorowes twayne

After this lesson/the byrde began a songe
Of her escape greatly reioysynge;
And she remembred also the great wronge
Done by the churle/firste at her takinge
Of her array/and her empryssonynge
Glad that she was out of drede
Sayd vnto hym/houerynge aboue his hede

Thou were quod she a naturall fole
To suffre me departe of lewdenesse
Thou ought to complayne and make dole
And in thy herte to haue great heuynesse
That thou lost so passynge great rychesse
which myght suffyce by value in rekenynge
To pay the raunson/of a myghty kynge

There is a stone which is called a Iacounce
Of golde engendred in myn entrayle
which of fyne golde/passeth a great ounce
Cytryne of colour lyke a granet of entayle
which maketh men dyuerous in batayle
And who so euer bereth on him this stone
Is fully assured agaynst his mortall fone.

who that hath this stone in possessyon

Shall suffre no pouertye ne no indygence
But of all treasour/haue plente and foyson
And euery man shall do him reuerence
And none enemy shall do to hym offence
But fro thy handes/now that I am gone
Playne yf thou wylt/for thy part is none.

It causeth loue/and maketh men gracyous
And fauourable in euery mannes syght
It maketh acorde/bytwene men Enuyous
It cõforteth sorofull/it maketh heuy hertes lyght
Lyke to poyson in colour shyneth bryght
I am a fole to tell all at ones
Or to teche a churle/ȳ prise of precious stones

Men shulde nat put a precyous margaryte
As rubyes saphyres/and other stones Inde
Emeraudes/nor rounde perles whyte
Afore tuhe swyne that loue draffe of kynde
For a sowe delyteth as I fynde
More in foule draffe her pygges for to glade
Than in all the pery/that cometh of garnerd

Eche thynge draweth to his semblable
Fysshe in the see/beestes on the grounde
The ayre for foules is moost comendable
And to the ploughe man totyl the lande
And a churle to haue a mucforke in hande
I lese my tyme/any more to tary
Or to teche a churle of the lapydary

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That thou haddest/thou gettest nomore ageyne
Thy lyme twygges and thy panters I defye
To let me go/thou were foule ouersene
To lese thy rychesse/only of foly
I am nowe fre to synge and to fle
where that my lyste/he is a fole at all
That goeth at large/and maketh hymselfe a thrall

To here of wysdome thyne eares ben defe
Lyke to an asse/that lysteneth to an harpe
Thou mayst go pype/in a yue lefe
For better it is to synge on thornes sharpe
Than in a cage/with a churle to carpe
For it was sayd of folkes longe a gone
That a churles byrde/is often wo be gone

The churle felt his hert atwayne
For very sorow/and a sonder ryue
Alas quod he/I may well wepe and playne
As a wretch neuer lyke to thryue
But to mourne in pouertye all my lyue
For of foly/and of wylfulnesse
I haue lost holy all my rychesse.
¶ I was a lorde I cryed out on fortune
And had great treasour late in my kepynge
which myght haue made me longe to contynue
with that stone to haue lyued lyke a kynge
Or yf that I had set it in a rynge
Borne it vpon me/I haue good ynoughe
Me neded no more/to haue gone to the ploughe

whan the byrde harde the churle thus moutue
And how that he was heuy of his chere
She toke her flyght/and gan agayne returne
Towarde hym and sayd as ye shall here
O thou dull churle wysdome for to lere
That I the taught/all is lefte behynde
Raced away and clene out of thy mynde

Taught I the nat/this wysdome in sentence
To euery tale brought vp of newe
Nat to hastely to gyue credence
Unto the tyme/thou know that it be true
All is nat golde/that sheweth goldysshe hewe
Nor stones all/by nature as I fynde
Be nat saphyres/that shewe colours ynde.

In this doctryne I haue lost my labour
To teche the such prouerbes of substaunce
Here mayst thou se/thy lewde blynde errour
For all my body peysed in a balaunce
weyeth nat an ounse/rude is thy remembraunce
I to haue more peyse closed in myne entrayle
Than all my body/set to the contertayle

All my body weyeth not an vnce
How myght I than haue in me a stone
That peyseth more than doth a great Jarouce
Thy brayne is dull/thy wyt is almost gone
Of thre wysdomes thou hast forgotten one
For thou shuldest not after my sentence

To euery tale/gyue to hasty credence.

I bade also beware/both euyn and mozowe
Foz thynge lost/by soden auenture
Thou sholdest not make to moche sozowe
whan thou seest/thou mayst it nat recure
And there thou saylest that thou dost thy busy cure
In thy snare to catche me agayne
Thou art a sole/thy labour is in vayne.

In the thyzde/thou dost also raue
Foz I bade/thou sholdest in no wyse
Couete thynge/which thou mayst nat haue
In whiche thou hast fozgotten myn empzyse
Thus I may say/playnly to deuyse
That thou hast of madnesse fozgotten all thys
Notable wysdomes/that I taught the

It were foly/moze with the to carpe
Oz pzeche of wysdome moze oz lasse
I holde hym mad/that bzyngeth fozth an harpe
Theron to teche a rude dull asse
And madderishe/that syngeth to a sole a masse
And he is most mad/that doth his busynesse
To teche a churle/termes of gentylnesse.

And semblably/in Apzill and in May
when gentyll byzdes make most melody
The cuckow syngeth but one laye
Of other tunes/she hath no fantasy

Thus euery thynge/as bokes specifye
As foules and bestes of euery age.

From whens they came they take talage
The vintener treath of his holsome wynes
Of gentyll frutes/bosteth the gardener
The fysscher casteth his hokes and his lyens
To catche fysshe/in euery fresshe ryuer
Of tythe oflande/treateth the labourer
The gentylman/treath of gentrye
And the churle delyteth hym all in rybaudry.

All one to the/a lauson as a kyte
As good an owle as a poppyngay
A donghyll ducke/as daynty as a fnyte
who serueth a churle/hath many a carefull daye
A due fyr churle/fare well I flye my way
For I cast me neuer henssorth to my lykynge
A sore a churle/any more to synge.

Ye folke that shall this fable se or rede
Newe forged tales/I counseyle you to fle
For losse of gooddes/take neuer to great hede
Nor be nat sory for none aduersyte
Nor couete thynge/that may not recouered be
And remembre where euer ye gone
That a churles byrde/is euer wo begonne
Unto my purpose/this proued is fully ryue
Rede and reporte by olde remembraunce
That a churles byrde and a knaues wyle

Haue oftentymes/great sorow and myschaunce
And who that hath fredome/hath all suffysaunce
For better is fredome/with lytel in gladnesse
Than to be thrall/with all worldly rychesse

Go lytell queyer/and recommende me
Unto my mayster/with humble affection
Beseechynge hym lowly of mercy and pyte
Of this rude makynge/to take compassyon
And as touchynge the translacyon
Out of frenche/how it englisshed be
All thynge is sayd vnder correction
with supportacyon/of your benygnite.

FINIS.

¶ Thus endeth the treatyse called charle & the byrde. ¶ Prited at Cantorbury in saynte Paules parysshe by Johan Mychel.